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What Ms. Clinton won't tell you about healthcare

The administration, recovering the semiotic advantage it lost during the first months of its tenure, has thoroughly iconized its proposed health care policy, forcing anyone who wishes to challenge it to deal not only with an exotically complex proposal but with the carefully massaged image of the president's wife. Since the promoted image is one of a intelligent, charming feminist paragon, it becomes difficult to suggest that Ms. Clinton might be involved in one of the largest economic giveaways since the government handed the railroads 21 million free acres in the late 19th century. Or that much of her defense of the program comes down to uncredible versions of "trust us" or "excellent question, Senator" or "we will be sensitive to that" or "we share your concern." Or that the plan will primarily benefit a few large American corporations well positioned to take advantage of it. Or that the administration's cost accounting for its policy assumes a level of accuracy never before seen in Washington fiscal projections, let alone in any of Clinton's number-crunching to date. Or that the policy Ms. Clinton defends would, to varying degrees, replace medical decisions in healthcare with fiscal ones, supplant the traditional doctor-patient relationship with a highly institutionalized system, reduce greatly a patient's choice, and generally remake medicine along corporate lines.

Ms. Clinton developed the administration's policy in a secrecy that was at times maintained in defiance of the courts and the GAO. Her taskforce included individuals with serious conflicts-of-interest (many of whom never filed the required forms identifying these conflicts) and it gave only a token nod to consumers, advocates of alternative approaches, or doctors.

Nonetheless, with considerable assistance from the media, the canonization of Ms. Clinton began in earnest late last spring as the healthcare taskforce was trying to complete a plan so complex that the congressional briefing book ultimately was 239 pages long. Reported the *New York Times* on May 7:

Suddenly Hillary Rodham Clinton is back dominating the newstands, from *Family Circle* to the cover of *People*, from *Time* to the *Washington Post*. Her aides insist that the timing is all coincidental, but some political professionals see it as a useful exercise in image-burnishing for the release of the Administration's long-awaited proposal for health-care reform.

Typical of the fawning coverage was a *Washington Post* article headlined: HILLARY CLINTON'S INNER POLITICS: AS THE FIRST LADY GROWS COMFORTABLE IN HER ROLES, SHE IS LOOKING BEYOND POLICY TO A MORAL AGENDA.

The *Times* quoted Democratic poll taker Geoffrey Garin, who said: "This is going to be a very complicated plan, and in those circumstances people's faith in the author will be pretty important. If you don't know exactly know what a `health alliance' is all about, at least you know whether you trust Hillary Clinton."

It worked. A study of the first six months of the Clinton administration found that 79 percent of Ms. Clinton's network TV coverage was favorable as opposed to only a third of her husband's.

The Hillary hype escalated as Ms. Clinton spent several days on Capitol Hill the end of September fielding softball questions from members of Congress.

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The Progressive Review
Bucking the system since 1966

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Gone was all memory of the attorney who once blithely represented clients before agencies of her husband's government in Little Rock, explaining, "For goodness sakes, you can't be a lawyer if you don't represent banks." Absent was any sense of the irony about using a lawyer for corporate interests as a national role model in the first place. Even conservatives were cowed and feminist leaders, despite erstwhile demands for control of their own bodies, smiled or applauded as Ms. Clinton proposed turning the bodies of all Americans over to the care of a handful of huge corporations.

The media did no better, and willingly adopted the White House symbolic thrust, the import of which was that since Ms. Clinton was so wonderful her health plan must be likewise. Other media ignored the *Washington Times* Sept 29 story reporting that Ms. Clinton's former law firm had generated what "a Union County, Iowa, judge and a lawyer assigned to investigate the case described as 'excessive profits' for a client in the 1989 sale of 41 nursing homes in Iowa." Among the lawyers involved was now Associate Attorney General Webster L. Hubbell, whose duties in the Clinton administration include cracking down on healthcare fraud. Said the investigating attorney: "This is probably the worst case of excessive profiteering I've seen in 20 years of looking at these kinds of cases." According to the *Times*, White House staffers William H. Kennedy III and Vincent Foster (who committed suicide in July) worked the case as well. There is no evidence that Ms. Clinton was actively involved, but as a senior partner she would have profited from it.

The syrupy encomiums that substituted for journalistic coverage of the president's wife also obscured the fact that one week after her congressional testimony, the Rose firm was scheduled to open an office in Washington a few blocks from the White House. One of its clients is Prudential, a major potential beneficiary of the Clinton plan.

If, in fact, this was merely a traditional case of fawning over some attractive public official, it would be barely worth mentioning. But what makes this

> I'm sorry if I sound like a snob, but over the years I've developed fairly good relationships with a few doctors, and I have a feeling that if [the Clinton plan] goes into effect, I'll never see them again. I fear I'll end up in the teeming waiting room of an HMO, sitting on a cold folding chair, wearing those hideous paper slippers and a hospital gown that exposes your behind, shuffling down a bleak hallway, waiting to see the one doctor on call. We'll all be milling around, holding numbers in our hands, just like at an Eastern European fish market -- *Tony Kornheiser* in the *Washington Post*

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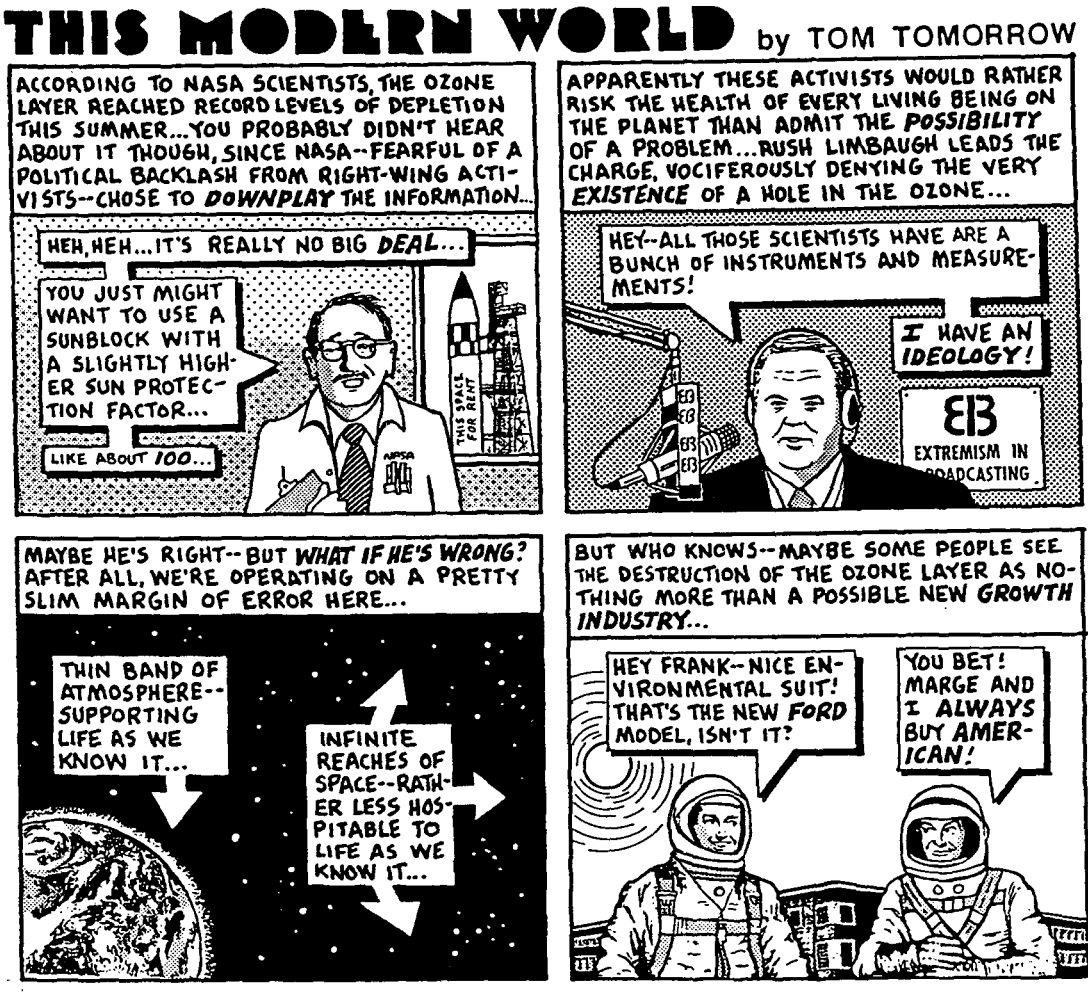
THIS MODERN WORLD by TOM TOMORROW
ACCORDING TO NASA SCIENTISTS, THE OZONE LAYER REACHED RECORD LEVELS OF DEPLETION THIS SUMMER...YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T HEAR ABOUT IT THOUGH, SINCE NASA--FEARFUL OF A POLITICAL BACKLASH FROM RIGHT-WING ACTIVISTS--CHOSE TO DOWNPLAY THE INFORMATION...
HEH, HEH...IT'S REALLY NO BIG DEAL...
YOU JUST MIGHT WANT TO USE A SUNBLOCK WITH A SLIGHTLY HIGHER SUN PROTECTION FACTOR...
LIKE ABOUT 100...
THIS SPACE FOR RENT
APPARENTLY THESE ACTIVISTS WOULD RATHER RISK THE HEALTH OF EVERY LIVING BEING ON THE PLANET THAN ADMIT THE POSSIBILITY OF A PROBLEM...RUSH LIMBAUGH LEADS THE CHARGE, VOCIFEROUSLY DENYING THE VERY EXISTENCE OF A HOLE IN THE OZONE...
HEY--ALL THOSE SCIENTISTS HAVE ARE A BUNCH OF INSTRUMENTS AND MEASUREMENTS!
I HAVE AN IDEOLOGY!
EIB
EXTREMISM IN BROADCASTING
MAYBE HE'S RIGHT--BUT WHAT IF HE'S WRONG? AFTER ALL, WE'RE OPERATING ON A PRETTY SLIM MARGIN OF ERROR HERE...
THIN BAND OF ATMOSPHERE--SUPPORTING LIFE AS WE KNOW IT...
INFINITE REACHES OF SPACE--RATHER LESS HOSPITABLE TO LIFE AS WE KNOW IT...
BUT WHO KNOWS--MAYBE SOME PEOPLE SEE THE DESTRUCTION OF THE OZONE LAYER AS NOTHING MORE THAN A POSSIBLE NEW GROWTH INDUSTRY...
HEY FRANK--NICE ENVIRONMENTAL SUIT! THAT'S THE NEW FORD MODEL, ISN'T IT?
YOU BET! MARGE AND I ALWAYS BUY AMERICAN!
TOM TOMORROW 9.21.93

fawning over some attractive public official, it would be barely worth mentioning. But what makes this different is that what we're supposed to be talking about is the quality and protection of every American life. The persona of Ms. Clinton sheds no light on the subject and, in fact, has greatly obscured many of the issues that should be under discussion.

Were it not so, the average American would be far more aware of the variety of ways Ms. Clinton and her husband are misleading the public on healthcare. Here are some of the things they haven't told you:

☞ The plan is based on turning one seventh of the economy -- the medical industry -- over to an oligopoly of large corporations, led by the largest insurance companies but perhaps also including other mega-corporations that may wish to enter the profitable field the Clintons are proposing to establish.

☞ Both the Clintons have claimed that their system will expand patient choices. This is blatantly untrue. As Harvard doctors David Himmelstein and Steffie Woolhandler pointed out in a letter to the *New York Times*, the Clinton plan would "'in effect obliterate private practice and other small-scale providers, leaving patients to choose from a menu offering only corporate care served up by insurance giants like Prudential and Aetna."

☞ The Clintons' plan will force patients and doctors into health maintenance organizations. Not only will this produce an horizontal oligopoly but vertical monopolies as well. As Melvin Konner noted in the *New York Times*: "A few powerful insurers would control the delivery of care from the top down." According Dr. Sidney Wolfe, director of Public Citizen's Health Research Group, a recent study found that eight companies already own 45% of the HMOs in the country. The eight are: Blue Cross, Cigna, Aetna, Travelers, MetLife, Prudential, Humana and United Health Care.

☞ A study reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that a majority

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☞ From a recent article in *Lancet* by William Glazer, an international health expert: "HMOs were invented not by Americans but by Europeans; they are not new but were the most common way of organizing health insurance a century ago. At that time, workers joined a sickness fund, the fund hired its own doctors on capitation fees or salaries, the fund had agreements with certain hospitals; a patient consulted out-of-plan providers only by paying out-of-pocket. Because the public opposed lock-ins, subsequent national health insurance laws have guaranteed that every insured person can consult any doctor and hospitals. . . .HMOs can not survive under national health insurance laws. They endure only in the United States, which alone lacks the national health insurance laws that guarantee free choices by patients and doctors."

of HMO patients were unhappy with the system. In contrast only three percent of Canadians would trade their system for ours.

☞ Part of Clinton's cost-accounting for his health plan involves an incredible fifty percent decline in the annual increase of funds spent on health care between 1996 and 1997. As Dr. Wolfe put it, "If you believe in the tooth fairy, you will believe in this."

☞ The plan also assumes a $239 billion cost savings in Medicare and Medicaid between 1996 and 2000. How will these savings be achieved? Most likely by cutbacks in service. Further, as Dr. Himmelstein notes, Medicaid has a current overhead of 3-4%. Under the Clinton plan it would be run through the private insurance system with an overhead of 13%, an increase in costs that will have to come from somewhere, presumably from the Medicaid program itself.

☞ Although the Clintons like to say they are sensitive to the concerns of small businesses facing large increases in healthcare costs, the *Wall Street Journal* quotes one congressmember as reporting he was told by Ms. Clinton: "I can't go out and save every under-capitalized entrepreneur in America."

☞ Under managed care, insurance companies are already pressuring doctors and mental health specialists to provide less expensive forms of care. For example, a therapist will be told by the insurer to prescribe a drug rather than continue with therapy sessions. Under the Clinton plan this sort of drug pushing could be expected to rise substantially.

☞ It takes about the same number of people to run Blue Cross in Massachusetts as it does to run the entire single-payer system in Canada -- a system about ten times as large. -- *Sam Smith*

Foreign affairs quiz

Here is a quick foreign policy quiz:

A national leader whose administration is rife with corruption suspends the national parliament, ignores the highest court in the land, fires the nation's top prosecutor, forces the resignation of the country's top judge, dismantles regional and local legislative bodies, shuts down a 15 newspapers, censors others and bans ten political parties . This leader is:

A. A notorious warlord.

B. A former Communist official attempting to consolidate his power.

C. A fervent democrat working towards free and fair elections.

If you are a member of the Clinton administration, the correct answer is C, provided the leader is Boris Yeltsin.

While there are a number of arguments that can be made for preferring Yeltsin to the probable alternatives, his commitment to democracy is not one. Even some mainstream writers about events in Moscow have had to pull their punches. For example, David Remnick wrote in the *New York Times*:

Even critical supporters of Boris Yeltsin, myself included, recognize that many opponents have taken reasonable issue with him . . . Only the blind and the heartless can fail to recognize that millions of 'new poor' have fallen victim to rising inflation and that nearly all of Russia's nascent capitalism is being corrupted by rampant bribery and organized crime.

The *Washington Post*'s former Moscow correspondent Michael Dobbs admitted that:

Sending tanks and paratroopers to storm an elected parliament -- resulting in scores of casualties -- is hardly a triumph for the democratic process.

But Clinton and much of the media have persisted in describing events in Russia with Punch & Judy simplicity as a struggle between "democratic reformers" and "hardline extremists."

There is nothing new in this. From the start of devolution in the Soviet Union, America's leaders have preached a simplistic gospel to the Russians that declared capitalism and democracy inseparable. Those

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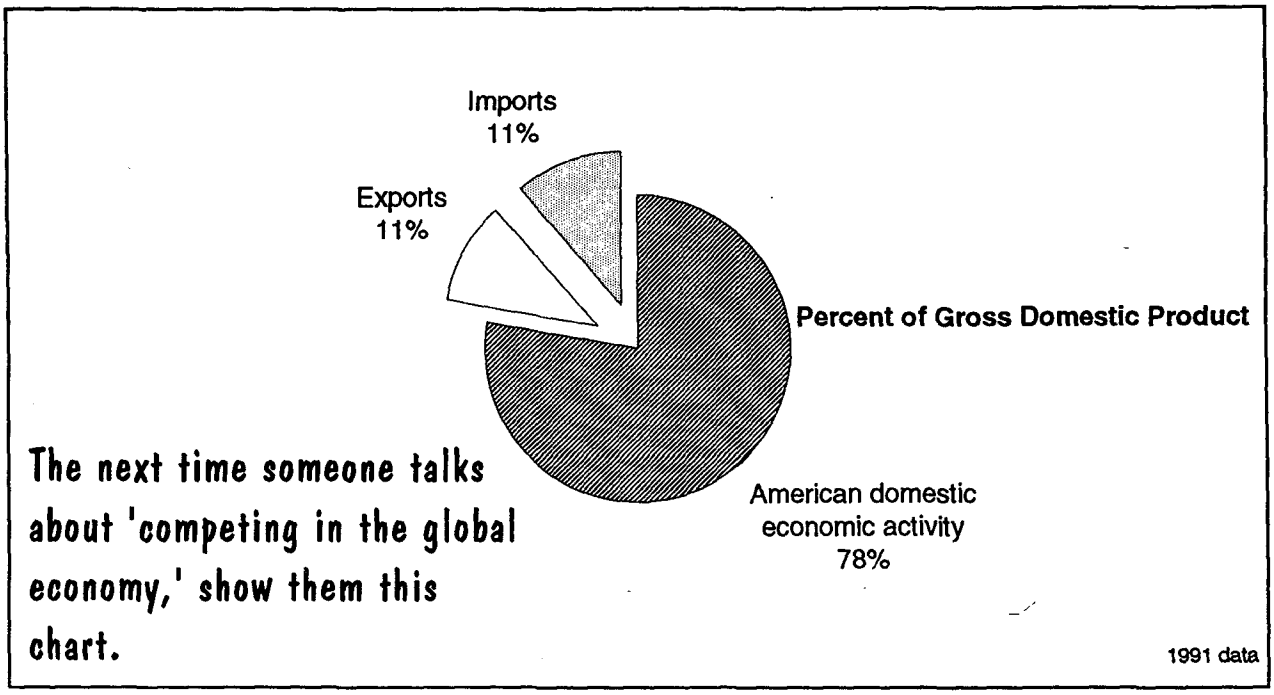

The next time someone talks about 'competing in the global economy,' show them this chart.

who, like Yeltsin, committed themselves to rapid privatization gained subsidiary designation as democratic reformers. This was despite the fact that the policies they proposed were conceived and promoted by an American right whose interests were primarily economic rather than political. For example, one of the chief privateers in Russian economic waters, Jeffrey Sachs, wrote in the *Economist* several years ago that "Western observers should not over-dramatize lay-offs and bankruptcies. Poland, like the rest of Eastern Europe, now has too little unemployment not too much." The former nations of the Soviet bloc have been encouraged to wean themselves from communist economics much as General Sherman encouraged Georgia to wean itself from the confederacy.

No one told the Russians that we had about a hundred years to get our democratic institutions down pat before being faced by serious threats from large corporate interests. No one told them that the Constitution says nothing about free enterprise and that many of the economic values being encouraged were incubated in an era now known as that of the robber barons. And no one seemed to notice that the only modern attempt in America to practice the sort of economics being foisted on Moscow has resulted in an extraordinary national debt, large chronic unemployment, two million layoffs in two years, and a massive loss of trust in the public institutions of this country.

Such facts have not prevented the media or Clinton from persistently referring to capitalism and democracy in the same breath. A correspondent from National Public Radio even went so far as to invent a form of government called *market democracy*, which she apparently thought was an improvement on the Jeffersonian model.[1]

In fact, Clinton and the privateers want neither free markets nor free politics. What they desire for Russia is much the same as Clinton desires for the United States: a corporate state in which the government serves the interest of its largest private firms, preferably American-owned corporations. A sort of Arkansas writ large, only with the multinationals rather than chicken producers calling the shots.

The Russians have paid mightily for their efforts to put into reality a Reaganesque economic fantasy. What neither they nor American free market groupies understand is that ultimately the corporate state and democracy are incompatible. The former leads inevitably to fascism -- which, as George Orwell pointed out, is just an extension of capitalism -- destroying democracy in its wake. The recent events in Russia have given us a taste of how it can happen.

This is far from a theoretical matter even in the United States. In September the government and the big three auto makers announced a joint venture to develop a highly fuel efficient car. Said Vice President Gore:

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[1] On the other hand she may have been referring to a democracy that was for sale, in which case we have to admit she may have been on to something.

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We have a strategic interest as a nation in meeting the goal we've set in this program, It's an act of patriotism . . .

Gore is not alone. In a review of a new book by Edward Luttwak, director of the Center of International and Strategic Studies, Jeffrey Garten writes that Luttwak "calls for a mobilization of economic assets in the same way we once mobilized the military to fight wars. Consumer spending must give way to saving and the nurturing of our productive industries. The support of technologically advanced industries must be seen not just in terms of jobs or higher standards of living, but as an instrument of state power."

In the 1950s we laughed at the claim that what was good for GM is good for the nation. Now we have declared it national policy not only for the Russians but for ourselves. Yet, as the Russians have found, making democracy a vassal of the corporate bottom line inevitably diminishes democracy -- and doesn't even guarantee a profit. -- s.s.

WEATHER REPORT

Land of the free

☞ The Clinton administration is pushing ahead with plans to make the "clipper computer chip" the national standard for scrambling data. Computer companies, civil libertarians and others are strongly opposing the idea, which would greatly simplify eavesdropping by the FBI and the NSA. The Clinton administration has proposed that after receiving court authorization, police agencies could still not listen in without the technical assistance of two government agencies operating as "escrow agents" for the decrypting keys. Critics say that relying on government agencies to police their fellow bureaucrats is hardly protection.

☞ According to a story by Tim Weiner in the *New York Times*, four former Reagan administration officials say the Pentagon not only lied about the capabilities of Star Wars to fool the Soviets, but to fool Congress as well.

☞ The Government Accountability Program reports that the practice of forcing government whistleblowers to undergo psychiatric examination continues despite the clearly punitive motivation involved. A recent example is the case of Marlene Flor, who works for the Department of Energy. She had rejected a project involving the CIA because it would use a highly dangerous -- and classified -- chemical that the test site was not prepared to handle. Even though DOE accepted Flor's suggestion for a less dangerous chemical, it removed her from oversight responsibilities and stripped her of her security clearance. A security agent told her that she was a "threat to national security." She was then required to undergo a psychiatric exam, which focussed on her complaints about DOE and her concerns about the status of women in the agency. The psychiatrist informed her that "DOE feels you are out of the norm because you have filed more than one EEO complaint." GAP has taken on Flor's case.

☞ The *New York Times* reports that inmates at an Alabama work farm "make a daily choice: go to work or wear handcuffs, sometimes hitched to an iron rail under the blazing sun." A lawsuit is underway.

☞ On behalf of the United States, George Bush signed an international according at Copenhagen in 1990 under which all signatories agreed to guarantee equal suffrage to adult citizens, ensure that votes are counted honestly, respect the right of citizens to seek public office, respect the right of individuals and groups to establish their own political parties and provide such parties with the necessary legal guarantees to enable them to compete with each other on an equal basis.

In September, the Democracy Project took testimony on how the federal government and various states violates these accords. Transcriptions of the proceeding have been requested by the governments of Russia and the Ukraine as well as by the US congressional commission on the accords. If just one signing nation requests it, the US must respond to the testimony.

Drug busts

☞ More evidence of the failure of the war on drugs: record numbers emergency room visits last year for drug overdoses. The number of visits by cocaine users was up 18%, the number for heroin users up 34% and marijuana cases up 48%.

☞ A study in New York, where the prison population has increased five-fold since mandatory drug sentencing, has found that most of those incarcerated under the required sentencing are relatively low level addict-dealers. Last year 45% of all new inmates in the state were convicted on drug charges, with even minor varieties carrying tougher sentences than for rape or manslaughter.

☞ Two Reagan appointed appeals judges threw out the case of Brett Kimberlain against prison officials for suppressing his accusations that he once sold pot to Dan Quayle. The head of federal prisons personally intervened in the case during the 1992 presidential campaign to prevent Kimberlain from holding a news conference and to order the prisoner placed in special detention. Said the one Carter-appointee on the three-judge panel, the majority's ruling was "unfathomable."

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☞ *From a Cato Institute Report by James Gstrowski:* Assume that [drug] legalization led to 10 million new cocaine users, which, all else equal, could cause an additional 400 deaths a year. However, assume also that a mere 5 percent of these users switched to cocaine from tobacco . . .Tobacco-related death would eventually decrease by about 3250 per year, and the result would be a net gain in lives saved of 2,850.

☞ There are now more people in the nation's prisons because of drug charges than for either property crimes or crimes of violence.

☞ The Drug Enforcement Administration was conducting random searches of most customers leaving a San Francisco-area chemical company. A federal judge told it to stop.

☞ The *Raleigh News & Observer,* one of the biggest papers in North Carolina, has endorsed the legalization of marijuana. Meanwhile in another part of the state, the *Chapel Hill News,* responding to local incidents, editorialized:

"Not just in Chapel Hill, but across the nation, police increasingly seem drawn to adopt a more and more militaristic image. While that image might strike terror in the heart of suspects making them easier to arrest, it also raised fears and concerns in the rest of us. When police begin to look -- and -- act like storm troopers or secret police, we all have reason to be concerned."

Foreign affairs

☞ As an increasing number of members of Congress began to show some backbone on the Somali matter, some phrased their angst in a peculiar fashion. They suggested that we should leave Somalia unless the administration could produce some clear rationale for us being there. The idea of an ex-post-facto rationale is not new -- numerous ones were tried in the case of Vietnam -- but all should be treated with great skepticism. The best time to have a rationale is before you do something. Afterwards is almost always too late.

☞ *One from column A and one from column B:* A senior administration official told the *New York Times* in early October that "we want to keep the pressure on Aidid. We don't want to spend all day, every day chasing him. But if opportunity knocks, we want to be ready. At the same time, we want go get him to cooperate on the prisoner questions and on a political settlement."

☞ *From Rakiya Omarand* and *Alex De Waal, co-directors of African Rights, for Pacific News Service:* By now the single biggest error of the occupation had also become apparent: there were virtually no checks on the behavior of the troops, nor were there any procedures for redress. Even those Somalis who supported the U.N. presence in the country were deeply outraged by the conduct of the numerous soldiers who beat, harassed and even killed hundreds of Somalis with impunity. While no one questions that Aidid's forces killed 23 Pakistani soldiers, in Somali eyes this crime is no worse than the dozens of innocent Somali deaths caused by international forces.

In the name of pursuing Aidid, U.N. forces attacked hospitals, shot into crowds of demonstrators, bombarded political meetings, and gunned down women and children. The U.N. justifies the deaths on the grounds that all people in the vicinity of combat are considered combatants.

The mediacracy

Sen. Byron Dorgan has come up with a non-censorious way of pressuring television networks to cut back on gratuitous violence. He has proposed a law that would require the FCC to issue quarterly reports on the amount of violence on TV, listed by show and sponsor.

NAFTA notes

☞ The Government Accountability Project has found that the US/Canadian Free Trade Agreement brought

From rules promulgated by Antioch College regarding "interactions" of a sexual nature: "All sexual contact and conduct between any two people must be consensual; consent must be obtained verbally before there is any sexual contact or conduct; if the level of sexual intimacy increases during an interaction (i.e., if two people move from kissing while fully clothed -- which is one level -- to undressing for direct physical contact, which is another level), the people involved need to express their clear verbal consent before moving to that new level; if one person wants to initiate moving to a higher level of sexual intimacy in an interaction, that person is responsible for getting the verbal consent of the other person(s) involved before moving to that level; if you have had a particular level of sexual intimacy before with someone, you must still ask each and every time . . . Asking 'Do you want to have sex with me?' is not enough. The request for consent must be specific to each act."

Antioch defined sexual harassment as including "but is not limited, to unwelcome and *irrelevant* comments, references, gestures or other forms of personal attention which are *inappropriate* and which may be *perceived* as persistent sexual overtones or denigration." *[Emphasis added]*

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increases in contaminated meat imports, evasion of inspection by Canadian industry and circumvention of import and quota laws by countries not part of the agreement. GAP sees similar problems in Mexico. In fact, unlike Canada where the USDA found that the meat inspection was comparable to the US system, "for most of the last decade, the Mexican meat and poultry inspection system has been either ineligible or restricted in its export of meat and poultry across the board by US law."

Good news

The AFL-CIO biennial convention passed a resolution condemning gay-bashing initiatives such as those in Oregon and Colorado. The resolution attacked "violence motivated by bigotry, prejudice and hate such as cross burning, police brutality, church defacement and gay bashing.

Loose change

☞ *The Left Business Observer* notes that as a percent of gross domestic product, the US deficit is smaller than that of France, Italy, the UK, and the European Community average. It is at approximately the G7 average.

☞ The agreement in 1984 that set the rules for the break up of the old Bell system barred the new baby Bells from entering the long-distance service business. The planned monster merger between Bell Atlantic and Tele-Communications were put the new firm in that business. So why is the deal happily plunging ahead? Because of an assumption that the Clinton Justice Department will grant a waiver to permit the merger, thus overruling anti-trust objections.

Just politics

☞ A 25% cut in White House staff? Clinton would eventually claim to have achieved the goal, but he did so by not including the Offices of Management and Budget and US Trade Representative in the total and by transferring some staff to other federal agencies.

☞ Austerity politics hasn't hurt Ross Perot one bit says the new *Perot Periodical.* Because Ross is heavily into bonds, which have been doing very well in these penny-pinching times, Perot's wealth has soared an estimated $250 million.

☞ If Colin Powell does run for public office, one of the first questions journalists should try him out on is this: why in 1987, according to David Corn of the *Nation,* did you tell Iran-Contra investigators you didn't know if your boss Casper Weinberger kept a diary? In 1992 you, under oath, described these diaries in considerable detail. Corn says he tried to hawk the story to CNN and ABC but executives at both networks killed it.

☞ The East Liverpool, Ohio, incinerator, long an environmental target, continues puffing away. This despite a promise by Gore to stop it. A story by Liana Clorfene-Casten in the *Nation* notes that the EPA official ultimately responsible for decisions on the incinerator is Deputy Administrator Robert Susman, a law school classmate of Bill and Hillary, and a former legal counsel for the Chemical Manufacturing Association. Two of CMA's biggest clients at the time, DuPont and BASF, were negotiating contracts to supply two-thirds of the waste to WTI, reports Clorfene-Casten.

An HMO story the Clintons would just as soon you didn't read

That there is big money in HMOs was dramatically proven some years back by Miguel Recarey Jr. His International Medical Centers received more than a billion dollars in federal funds before the operation folded. The feds are still looking for $200-300 million that was never accounted for. Despite rules that no more than 50% of an HMO's clients could be on Medicare, Recary's operation ended up with almost 80% Medicare clients.

Some credit the millions Recarey paid for lobbying, consulting and legal help. Among his friends: Lyn Nofziger, John Sears, Lee Atwater and Jeb Bush not to mention the law firm of former Florida governor Reuben Askew. Bush, who is running for governor and who received $75,000 for an IMC real estate deal that never came off, admits making phone calls for Recary to Medicare officials but says, "I asked that they be given a fair hearing -- that's not lobbying."

Other charges swirled around Recary: that IMC was used to funnel millions to the Contras and that it was treating wounded Contras with Medicare money. In 1987, with IMC getting $360 million annually in Medicare funds, the feds finally declared it insolent. Recary was indicted: for allegedly paying off a union to get a healthcare contract, for wiretapping his own employees and for using Medicare funds to pay for his defense.

After receiving an expedited tax refund of $2.2 million (which he deposited in the Bahamas) Recardy disappeared. Last month he was discovered in Spain and arrested.

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Furthermore. . .

Stephen Aftergood, whose *Secrecy & Government Bulletin* provides invaluable coverage of government secrecy issues, notes in a recent issue that "excessive government secrecy seems to be spawning, in a dialectical fashion, an increasingly aggressive public interest sector to challenge it." He cites a new volume called *Area 51 Viewer's Guide.*

Area 51 is the nickname for an unacknowledged military site in Nevada which has encouraged various UFO theories as well as reports of a hypersonic aircraft known as the Aurora. Author Glenn Campbell, who claims agnosticism on such matters, offers practical suggestions for the curious:

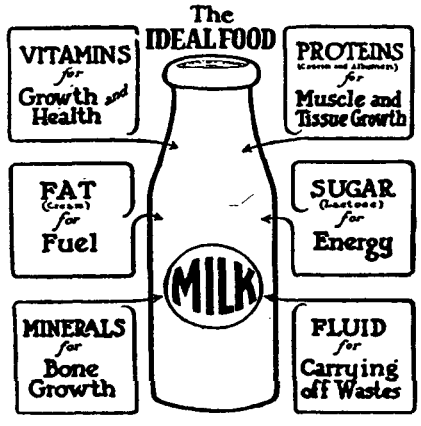
- He writes: "Don't get any kooky ideas about conducting Greenpeace-style commando raids to overwhelm security and 'smash open the wall of UFO secrecy.' These installations are equipped with overwhelming firepower, and stopping an invasion is exactly what it is there for."
- Campbell suggests that since one can not purchase satellite photos of the area from the US government you should contact the Russians. It seems, however, that economic reform in satellite photos sales is ahead of the Russian curve: one shot of the region sold for about $1900.
- For those "who want to experience the thrill of espionage without breaking the law, there is a small mountain you can climb to look down on the secret Groom Lake air base."
- The book includes the flight schedules of the "Janet Airways" 737s that bring work crews from Las Vegas every workday at dawn. It also recounts anecdotes of citizen spies like the guy "who attached a video camera to a radio-controlled model race car and sent it down the Groom Lake Road."

Copies of the work are available for $15 plus $3 postage from Glenn Campbell, HCR Box 38, Rachel, NV 89001.

THE IDEA MILL

Performance zoning

The latest issue of *CityWatch* magazine describes a new type of zoning that "uses points to determine what the full impact of a development will be, rather than only considering use or residential density. For example, in the current R4 zone of Asheville NC, a 20-story office building with 50 employees would be permitted but a home-based sewing industry with three workers would not. Under performance zoning, it would be just the other way around." Write William Shireman and Meg MacLeod: "Negative points might be given for noise, increased traffic, square footage of the building or paved surface; positive points would got for things like amount of open space set aside for public use, extra sidewalks, or putting in a traffic light or community center." One county in North Carolina and several communities in Kentucky already use performance zoning and Asheville is considering it.



ROADSIGNS

Banking

Average charge for a returned check: $18.35 (up 21% since 1990)

Average cost to banks of a returned check: $1.32

Average profit to banks for a returned check: $17.03

Ecology

Amount raised by United Way in 1992: $2.5 billion

Amount given by United Way to environmental groups in 1992: $21,000

Transportation

Hours wasted daily by Los Angeles drivers caught in traffic jams: 100,000

Average freeway speed of Los Angeles drivers not caught in traffic jams: 30 mph.

Sources

Banking: Consumer Federation of America & US PRIG **Ecology:** Safe Energy Council **Transportation:** Environmentalists for Sustainable Transportation

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FIELD NOTES

READING

Real Choices, New Voices: Douglas Amy discusses proportional representation in this new book from Columbia University Press.

Perot Periodical: Quarterly newsletter following the doings and sayings of America's third wheel. $15 from Box 435, Riverdale NY 10471.

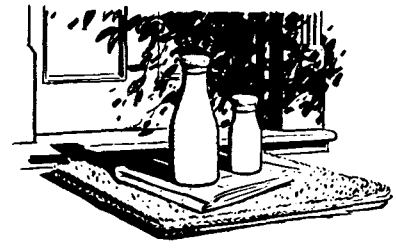
Fusion: Multiple Party Nomination in the United States: This pamphlet describes fusion politics and how it was suppressed. Also details state-by-state laws relating to fusion. Extremely useful to anyone involved in third party or alternative politics. From the Center for a New Democracy, 1324 Drake Street, Madison WI 53715

GROUPS

Families Against Mandatory Minimums.: This group is working hard against the increasing injustices of mandatory sentencing, which takes judicial discretion out of the hands of judges and places it in the hands of US Attorneys. FAMM has been growing rapidly and now has over 18,000 members with lots of state chapters. *FAMM, 1001 Penna Ave NW #200S, DC 20004*

The Society for the Reduction of Human Labor: This group's philosophy is based on the "assumption that current technology has and certainly next century's technology will have, the means to create a society, eventually worldwide, that will allow to reduce to a minimum the task of mere economic survival. Memberships are $25, student membership and newsletter subscriptions are $15. Write SRHL, 1610 E. College St., Iowa City IA 52245.

Paul Krassner, the Thomas Edison of alternative journalism and erstwhile columnist in these pages, has written his autobiography --*Confessions of a Raving, Unconfined Nut: Misadventures in the Counter-Culture* -- which is now available at your local book pusher. Krassner has also upped the frequency of his raving, unconfined newsletter, *The Realist,* to bimonthly. For the next six issues send $12 to Box 1230, Venice CA 90294



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